

Quick Strokes

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California Business Education Association brings 1981 state conference to Sacramento

April 11, 12, and 13 are the dates and the Red Lion Motor Inn, 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento, is the place for the California Business Education Association 1981 state conference. Inquiries should be addressed to CBEA Central Office, P.O. Box 633, Los Angeles, CA 94022.

The most interesting event, from the point of view of innovators in clerical training and word processing, is the Hands-on Room, like the rooms that are devoted to caucus sessions but with equipment on hand on which the conferees may take a workout—much different from the look-but-don't-touch exhibits that prevail generally at conferences and conventions.

Albert C. Kolb, a resourceful teacher from the Carmel Middle School, will have four Smith-Corona typewriters with the ASK arrangement on the keyboard. Philip Davis expects to be there, too, with an IBM Selectric, converted to provide a variant of the same arrangement.

Booths in the merchandise exhibit, separate from the hands-on room, will also show some equipment with the alternative arrangement as an option. Mrs. Maureen Gale of, IBM Sacramento, for instance, assures us that all current Selectrics are available with an alternative arrangement at no extra charge, and that the alternative is an option on their Displaywriter.

Oregon State Senate Bill 493 calls for gradual transition to efficiency at state agency keyboards

Four Oregon State Senators have introduced a bill to make mandatory by 1984, willingness on the part of candidates for clerical state civil service jobs, to learn the Oregon Alternative arrangement of characters on alphanumeric keyboards. Four members of the lower house of the Oregon legislature are prepared to introduce a companion measure there.

The printed text may be available. Queries should be addressed to Steve Anderson, president, Dvorak International Federation, 468 State St., Salem Oregon 97301.

Anderson reports that one state-employed typewriter operator has already called him to make a protest. This operator whose skill is on the conventional arrangement, may have visions of hordes of younger, equally ambitious operators competing with her for the scarce higher-level jobs.

Quick Strokes holds that a skilled, well-schooled, experienced operator on the old keyboard can hold his or her own against new keyboard competition indefinitely. After all, the old hand knows all the ropes and hawsers that the newcomer has still to learn.

The early volunteer for new-keyboard training does, indeed, pose some threat to his own contemporaries who cling to tradition. Competence comes quickly, so that the student on alternative can drill on vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and style.

Watson to the Time editors

Reference "Maltron" keyboard.

Sir, Dvorak Simplified keyboard is not dead — it's alive and kicking in Sydney, Australia, and in USA in Everett, Seattle, Decatur, Salem, Portland, Florida, Monterey, Carmel, Chicago, Sacramento, Vermont, Maine and other places.

Coming world contest will prove my words.

International Word Productivity Contest
Ronald Watson, executive director
Box 34, NSW 2106, Australia

(This is in response to their Jan. 26, 1981, issue. See also their Feb. 9 issue.)

Barnes, Ralph M., Motion and Time Study: Design and Measurement of Work, 7th edition

John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, has published a new and thoroughly revised edition of R. M. Barnes's great Motion and Time Study. Barnes is dean of the Graduate School of Management at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Alternative keying is dealt with in Chapter 17, starting on page 223 and titled "Principles of Motion Economy as Related to the Design of Tools and Equipment." Section 21, starting at page 231, states, "Where each finger performs some specific movement, such as typewriting, the load should be distributed in accordance with the inherent capacities of the fingers." Table 11, on that page, compares loads on each of the eight fingers under "ideal load" and "standard keyboard load." Fig. 158, on the next page, shows the same information graphically, on a chart showing hands with finger length proportioned to the loads.

Dean Barnes credits August Dvorak with originating the ideal arrangement of characters on which the present alternative is based and cites Typewriting Behavior in a footnote. The sixth edition of Motion, of eleven years ago, was skeptical about the chances of the ideal, classic Dvorak board. This edition notes that the new alternative arrangement is readily available. This would not be so if manufacturers did not see a strong latent and a developing effective demand for it.

DIF at Northwest Office Products Show

"Teachers and school administrators stopped at the booth featuring the alternative keyboard in greater numbers than last year," says Steve Anderson, "and were more knowledgeable about the topic." Anderson, attorney, president of the Dvorak International Federation, also played the role of booth attendant at the Northwest Office Products Show in Portland, Oregon, in January, both in 1980 and in '81.

DIF plans also to have an exhibit at the word-processing show in the same city at the end of March, 1981.

DIF is an organization of users and advocates of a rearrangement of characters on alphanumeric keyboards. It uses the term "Dvorak" for a modification of the classic arrangement that goes by that name. That is a graceful tribute to the memory of August Dvorak, although the fact is that the Oregon alternate arrangement differs from the classic Dvorak in the locations of 26 characters.

Alternative keying as an initial learning medium

A letter from Waldo T. Boyd, of Geyserville, California, brings some affirmative evidence in answer to a query, by Sir James Pitman, of London, England, about the benefit of starting students on the new keyboard arrangement even if the prospective employers are imposing the conventional arrangement on their new hires.

Boyd writes, "My daughter, Anna Ruhiyyih Boyd (Sandy) had her own portable typewriter with DSK. The teacher let her take it to learn the keyboard, using the regular exercises and doing all the work with the class on regular typewriters. She passed all her classmates up handily, of course, and during the second semester was assistant to the teacher, helping the slower students on the regular qwerty.

"Later, she decided to switch keyboards so she could get a job at State Farm Insurance, where she is still among the top performers on qwerty. I suspect the early training on DSK is responsible for her present high speed on qwerty, as anomalous as it may seem."

A certificate of award to Sandy for a 75-word-a-minute score in Typing I is dated 1969 and signed by P. A. Canobi, teacher, and Wayne P. Dunaway, principal, Geyserville High School.

Salem suburbs get the tidings

Steve Anderson and Teresa Black, boss and secretary, recently visited Central High School, serving the towns of Monmouth and Independence, to explain the alternative arrangement of keyboard characters to teachers and students. Ms. Black recounted her experience as a retrained-from-qwerty operator.

Anderson reports that their reception was cordial and that one teacher stated her intention of retraining herself on the new keyboard.

Ripples widening

Parent: I'd like to talk to you about a keyboard arrangement that you've probably never heard of.

Teacher: Which one?

Parent: It's called ASK, or DSK, or Dvorak.

Teacher: Here's a folder that I accumulated while I was at the University of Utah, working on my M.A.

Parent: Oh.

Some exchange like the above took place last semester at Otter Valley High School, Brandon, Vermont, between Mrs. Virginia Russell, parent, and Lynn Kinner, typing teacher. Mr. Kinner now has two students on the new arrangement, Kenneth Russell, eighth grade and Miss Laurie Scarborough, tenth.

Kenneth's mother admits that he, starting later, now performs better than she does at the alternative keyboard, especially in accuracy. No surprises here — professional instruction and a student in his early teens make the best combination.

A. C. Kolb in California Business Education Journal

Scheduled for the March, 1981, issue of the California Business Education Journal is an article on the ASK arrangement for alphanumeric keyboards. The journal is biannual. The volume and number are XVI, 2. Order from Brenda Baity, School of Business, California State University Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge CA 91330, \$3.50.

Laney College and Hunter's Point classes see the alternative keyboard alive

By Steve Driggs

I have taken the plunge twice now. I demonstrated with this machine at Hunter's Point College, San Francisco, and Laney College, Oakland, before sparsely attended typing classes. The instructors halted their classes and allowed their students to gather around while I gave my pitch. I didn't stress sales. I pumped them for response and interest. I felt somewhat like the bearer of bad tidings since both classes were finishing up four and a half months of practice at qwerty. But actually there were few moans and much enthusiasm among the students.

Converting ball-element typewriters, conventional arrangement to ASK

Bill Deets and Tom Hammett of Blodgett, Oregon, report that they are ready, willing, and able to rearrange the interposers in IBM Selectrics and Remington SR 101 single-element typewriters to provide an ASK arrangement of characters. In their flat rate of \$65 they include pickup, unpacking, conversion, repacking, and delivery to the shipping-back point.

This method of conversion permits the use of any IBM or Remington element that fits the machine.

The Deets-Hammett address is R. 3, Box 9, Blodgett, OR 97326, and telephone (503) 453-4205.

Consequences of calling the new keyboard arrangement by an old name

Savvy, the magazine for the executive woman, illustrates in a story in its March, 1981, issue what happens when we encourage the use of the term "Dvorak" in reference to the new, alternative arrangement of characters on keyboard.

The Savvy are department, responding to a call for art to ac-

company a story on "Dvorak", came in with a diagram from the 1930s, which shows a markedly different arrangement from the new alternative.

The Savvy writer, having found no record of large-scale practical applications of the 'thirties variant of the Dvorak design, concluded that "nothing" has happened even yet. As regards the authentic, original Dvorak, such is, indeed, the case.

The Oregon Alternate arrangement, with about fifty operators employed at it, is a different one, with an acknowledged debt to the design principles of the late August Dvorak but with the digits, punctuation, and special symbols almost entirely relocated.

The old obstacles are pretty well out of the way. Manufacturers supply the equipment with little cavil, schools teach the subject when the student provides a machine and a learner's manual, and jobs are available for more pretrained operators than have yet applied.

Robert S. Parkinson, researcher, writer, speaker, friend to the consumer

Graveside services were held on January 6, 1981, for Robert S. Parkinson, who died of cancer on December 30. His mother, his sister, the nurse who had attended him in Sunnyvale, California, Prof. Richard B. Lewis, of Los Altos, and the widow, Marie, attended. All spoke and verses from The Prophet were read.

Bob Parkinson's fame in his lifetime came mostly from his article, "The Dvorak Simplified Keyboard, Forty Years of Frustration," in Computers and Automation (now Computers and People), 21, 11, pp.18-25, and his address to a conference on non-technical barriers to innovation, sponsored some years ago by Ralph Nader and associates of his. Parkinson's graph that shows the comparative incidence of awkward sequences on the conventional arrangement and on the newer, Dvoraklike keyboards is reproduced in Yamada, "A Historical Study . . .", in Journal of Information Processing, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1980.

As long as the state of his health permitted however, Bob was indefatigable in promoting the better arrangement in every way that he could do so. He had high hopes that the communication explosion would blow some prosperity in his and his partners' direction. Aware of the abnormality of his immune system, he strove to make the most of his youth and strength while he had them.

Marie is enrolled at the University of Santa Clara.

McCauley on Parkinson

(By Telephone from Robert McCauley, Lompoc, California)

When I was working in the same office with Bob Parkinson for four years I thought how brilliant he was.

For some reason, however, I never expressed that to him directly. A physics major from Rice Institute, Bob seemed over-qualified to be working in the computer field. In technical perception, in ability to solve problems, he always excelled. Not only did he have the intelligence to perceive highly technical issues — he possessed a mission in life to communicate these things to others via the written word in every simple fashion.

He loved to support causes, such as the DSK. He loved "projects" and pursued them with an unequalled vigor and tenacity. Whether it was his 3D television invention, pursuit of the stock market, mastering the Russian language, art collecting, or the DSK, he became totally preoccupied with the project at hand.

His final project was his health. He had problems beyond the current medical profession's ability to diagnose. He studied and poked and pried for a solution himself. His vision was to unearth a solution to the problem and write a book to share his discoveries with the world. He specifically addressed "self diagnosis" — how to help doctors determine what is wrong with us. It was a book whose time had come.

Someone else will have to finish it, however; Bob became a victim of an additional disease, cancer, and died on December 31, 1980.

It happened two weeks before I was to visit him. My purpose was to finally tell him what a significant contribution to humanity his life had made. I did not get to, but I hope — and think — he knew anyway.

Flat-hand keying and the impracticality of it

Two magazines out of New York, *Time*, in its January 26, 1981, issue, and *Next*, a biannual in the literary and poetry fields, have recently featured the Maltron repositioning of keys. See also *Time's* Feb. 9 issue, with its riposte from Virginia de Ganahl Russell.

Lillian Malt, the deviser of the distorted board, is an experienced observer of linotype operators, who do hold their hands flat and do their stroking with the balls of their fingers. She may also have observed operators of typewriter, or typewriterlike, keyboards who also hold their hands flat and stroke with the finger balls. There are many such, but not any good ones.

Linotype operators use that stroke because they must — typewriter operators use it when their fingernails are too long. Linotype operators keep their nails short because that machine has a feather touch, and a slight flick with a too-long nail will bring down an unwanted matrix.

Mrs. Malt's hands-on experience at either keyboard must be scanty, for otherwise she would know that the flat position for the hands is much more tiring than the half-curved finger position which the regular key positioning was designed for.

Moneysworth interviews Alan Lloyd

Beginning secretaries' salaries of up to \$12,000 a year are cited by Alan Lloyd, quoted in "Pay Lures Men to be Stenos" in *Moneysworth* for February, 1981, page 18. Lloyd is director of career advancement and development for the Olsten agency.

"Quickly," he says, salaries go up to \$16,000-plus "if they know anything at all about computers or word processing." With the job title of executive secretary go salaries well over \$20,000. Men in greater number, he remarks, are now training for secretarial positions.

Note the "up to". Some secretaries earn less than these figures. Nevertheless, it is better to have a job with some prospects than to wish for one. Far better to attain competence quickly on the new keyboard and devote the saving in time to supplemental skills, than to drudge through a protracted course in the old qwerty and hope for a job at pool typing.

Olsten and its competitors all have brushup students with every qualification for office work except adequate keyboard skill. The answer is not, as Lloyd suggests, for employers to fix lower standards, but rather for the job candidates to offer higher scores.

Higher scores are the specialty of new-keyboard pretrained and retrained operators. New-keyboard competence is attained in varying lengths of time, always worth spending if the instruction is professional.

Even if the job-seeker does have to provide equipment, a worker who can command \$12,000 a year, or a little less, or much more, will always be able to finance purchase or rental.

Robert S. Allen, distinguished operator and journalist, dead at 80

The first user-operator of the Dvorak left one-hand arrangement, Robert S. Allen, of Washington, D.C., died on Feb. 23, 1981, at the age of 80, from a gunshot wound which police said was possibly self inflicted. He had been suffering from cancer for several years.

Allen suffered a wound in World War Two which led to amputation of his better arm, the right. In war an intelligence officer and in peace an investigative reporter, he needed something better than a conventionally arranged keyboard.

The Secretary of Defense of that time, J. V. Forrestal, ordered Commander August Dvorak to devise a suitable keyboard for such cases, and Dvorak did so. With diligent practice, Allen worked up to a 55-word-a-minute speed and put his skill to practical use in his profession.

Patrons of the Typewriting Institute for the Handicapped, of Phoenix, Arizona, learn on the same arrangement or on one that is closely similar.

LIMITED TIME—For 30 days—20% discount for cash with order no SCM ASK typewriters ordered from us. B. Adams, 4 Park Ave., Scarborough, ME 04074.

FOR RENT — Videotape, "Typewriters: Dvorak Made a Better One", narrated by Albert C. Kolb, Carmel (California) Middle School, time 14 minutes and 19 seconds. Narrator and secretary demonstrate an interesting and innovative alternative to the standard keyboard. Motivates student interest in the typewriter and in developing skills. Sony KCS 20. Per week. \$5. Shipping weight 1 lb., 12 ozs. Quick Strokes, Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691.


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TIME TO RENEW? This issue completes Vol. VIII of Quick Strokes. Subs for Vol. IX, through March, 1982, are due by May 20, 1981. Single sub still \$5; double sub, to two addresses or both to one address, \$7.50; quintuple sub, to various addresses, \$10; bundle of 20, to one address, \$28. In California, please add 6% tax.

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